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The Apostolical Commission:  
The Sermon at the consecration of the Right  
Reverend Leonidas Polk, D.D., Missionary  
Bishop for Arkansas.

by

Charles Pettit McIlvaine

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THE APOSTOLICAL COMMISSION:

THE SERMON

AT THE CONSECRATION

OF

THE RIGHT REVEREND LEONIDAS POLK, D. D.,

MISSIONARY BISHOP FOR ARKANSAS;

IN CHRIST CHURCH, CINCINNATI,

DECEMBER 9, 1838:

BY CHARLES PETTIT McILVAINE, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF OHIO.

GAMBIER, O

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MDCCC XXXVIII.

CINCINNATI, DEC. 9, 1833.

RIGHT REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,—

We have listened to your Sermon, this morning, with emotions we will not attempt to describe. We pray the divine blessing upon the holy truths contained therein.

In asking you to furnish a copy for publication, we feel assured that we shall gratify, not merely those who heard it, but far more who will delight to read it. We pray that God may long spare you, and give you grace to exhibit and recommend in your life and labors, the exalted sentiments set forth in the sermon of which we hereby request the publication.

Yours most affectionately in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM MEADE,  
*Assistant Bishop of Virginia.*

B. B. SMITH,  
*Bishop of Kentucky.*

JAMES H. OTEY,  
*Bishop of Tennessee.*

LEONIDAS POLK,  
*Missionary Bishop of Arkansas.*



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## THE APOSTOLICAL COMMISSION.

MATTHEW XXVIII. 18, 19, 20.

AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST; TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

It was a time of singular interest in the development of the divine purposes of grace to this world, when Jesus delivered these words to his Apostles. He stood before them in his once dead, but now risen body; ready to return to the right hand of God the Father, from whence he had come. The hour of his ascension is at hand. The preparation for the full establishment of his Church under the new and final dispensation is complete. The whole Mosaic economy is just about to expire. It has been one of light in comparison with the darkness that surrounded it, but of light shut up, like the mystic candlestick of its own tabernacle, in a single habitation, and shining upon only a single family of all the kindreds of the earth. That light is now to be brought out and set on high and made the light of the world. The gospel of salvation, by Jesus Christ, which by types and prophecies had before been preached obscurely only to a chosen people, is now to be read, unveiled, and published to every nation under heaven. Since the days of the Patriarchs, the Church had been national and local; it was now to be catholic, as well as to place and time as nation; catholic, because opening her gates to all people; catholic, because diffusing her blessings over all the earth; catholic, because intended for all ages to the end of the world. Two chief events alone

remained to be accomplished, before all this passing away of the old dispensation and the full introduction of the new could be completed; the one, the investment of the ministry of the gospel with its final and complete commission; the other, the sending of the promise of the Father—the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the light, and strength, and consolation of an infant Church—soon to be bereaved of the visible presence of its divine Author and Head. The descent of this promised power, the Apostles were directed to await in Jerusalem. They received it at the Pentecost. The communication of their commission was the work of a prior day, and is the event related in our text. The risen Saviour, surrounded by his Apostles, whose faith had been stunned by the crucifixion of their Lord, and was scarcely restored by his resurrection, was about to give them their commission as his ambassadors to the whole world, and to invest them with supreme authority, under himself, to plant, to rear, and to rule his universal Church. Such a ministry was as yet unknown. An office, so extensive, had not been thought of but in the inspired visions of the prophets. Jesus begins: *“All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.”* What a sublime introduction to such a commission! He had taken our sorrows—borne our sins—met our foes—died our death—and now, in reward of his victory, there was given him, as the Son of Man, the divine Mediator between God and man, “a name above every name,” “that all people, nations, and languages should serve him,” and that, as “head over all principalities and powers,” he might be “head over all things to His Church.” This infinite dignity he now asserts, and on the basis of this unlimited right, delivers the instructions of his Apostles, and invests them with their office. *“Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all*

*things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*

Now, my brethren, I am anxious to convey to your minds a full conception of the relative importance of the event here related. But this I cannot do, unless you conceive aright of the whole system of events and designs of God with which it was connected. You will perhaps imagine that I speak in very figurative language when I call the dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which then began, and is now fast advancing to its consummation, *the new creation*; and the times of which our text speaks, *the first day* of that new creation; and you will perhaps suppose me dealing in language exceedingly hyperbolical, and a comparison far overstrained, if I compare this new creation in point of sublimity, and glory, and importance, to the first, the creation of these visible heavens and earth; and especially if I say that this material workmanship must be considered as far inferior in all such respects to the other. But such is the language and such is the estimate of the Scriptures. They represent the Creator of all things as promising the dispensation of the gospel in such words as these: "*Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth* wherein dwelleth righteousness"—and they tell us, that the citizens of this new creation are "*new creatures* in Christ Jesus;" that they "*have put on the new man*," and are renewed in that image of God in which the first man was created and which by sin was lost; that this new creation, just as much as the creation of this globe, is the work of the infinite power of God, and that, as "*God commanded the light to shine out of darkness*," when the earth was without form and void," so doth he now with equal might and in equal majesty shine into the heart of the new creature in Christ Jesus to give him "*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*."

Nor is there any thing strained in this comparison. When I read the sublime narrative of the creation of the world, what impresses me most is not the commanding of order out of chaos—of light out of darkness; not the instant gathering together of the waters; nor the clothing of the new earth with its vesture of many colours; nor the storing of its surface and of its waters with things animate and inanimate; not even the over-spreading of it all, with this glorious firmament; nor the suspension there of suns and stars;—but that when all this temple of God was finished, and all was perfect, and all waited in silence the entrance of some appropriate worshipper—some high priest, with a mind capable of collecting all the incense of nature and a heart pure enough to offer it up, as in a golden censer, before the throne of God—that then said the Almighty, as if about to put the crown upon the head of his creation, “*let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” That was the last and far the greatest work of all—a *spiritual* creation, the creation of an immortal mind to take the lordship of all this glorious domain of matter—to occupy and enjoy it for his Creator; and that immortal mind exalted immeasurably above all the rest of things created upon the earth, in its possessing *the image and likeness of God*. That last work was emphatically *the* creation.

And then when sin had entered, and death by sin, why that sudden and mysterious change throughout all the provinces of animate and inanimate nature; paradise without an inhabitant; its entrance guarded by the flaming sword of the cherubin; man a downcast exile; all nature in mourning; the sun shining upon a desolated Eden and a blighted world? Alas, the glory of creation is departed—the noblest work of God, his spiritual workmanship, man in the likeness of his Maker is no more.—He is fallen! Sin has effaced the chief beauty of creation in having put out its light.



And now the altar is without a priest, the temple without a worshipper, and the golden censer broken and profaned.

But these "works of the devil" are to be destroyed. Ruined man is to be redeemed from that fall. A Mediator, the God-Man appears to restore him to the likeness of his Maker, and to the temple, and the altar, and the paradise; and so again to raise from all nature, by marvellous grace, the praise of God the Creator, through Christ the Redeemer. This is one of the two grand objects of the gospel; literally, *to create anew that lost image of God in man*. Well and truly then is the dispensation of the gospel, denominated of God, His *new creation*.

Like the creation of the heavens and the earth, this new workmanship is progressive. The evening and the morning were its first day, when the Spirit descended at Pentecost, and God said by "tongues of fire," *let there be light*, and the Apostles went every where preaching Christ, and myriads were made new creatures "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." It has had continual progress since, though Satan never ceasing to war against the second Adam, as against the first, has often impeded its purposes, defiled its beauty, and covered its sky with storms. It is now in its sixth day. "*The times of the restitution of all things*," as they were in the beginning of the world, and ever shall be, are near at hand. "We, according to the promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"\* most perfect. The last, finishing work, as in the old creation, will be the forming of the body of the new man out of the dust of the ground. Its ruins are now in the grave. At the trump of God it shall stand up, incorruptible, immortal; and "the spirits of the just made perfect" shall come down from God, out of heaven, and re-

\* 2 Pet: iii. 13.

possess their bodies, and so the creation will be complete and the work of the Redeemer ended. Then the everlasting Sabbath! Then will be seen "the Lord from heaven," Jesus the Redeemer, at once the Creator and Pattern of all, resting from his work of boundless grace, surrounded by an immaculate church which cannot be numbered for multitude, each blissful countenance reflecting his image, each ransomed saint radiant in his glory, beginning the Sabbath, hallowed and blessed to everlasting. And then will a song be sung by the Church, such as the sons of God, when they shouted for joy, at the finishing of this earthly creation, could not sing—such as Adam in Paradise could never have known—a song to which only the golden harps of those who have been new-created and redeemed from his fall could be strung: "*Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*"

Then will the comparison appear, between that new world of grace, with a shining tenantry of the ransomed, and perfected, and sealed inheritors of its glory, and the world of nature as the dawn of the first Sabbath beheld it, "when the morning stars sang together for joy," but when, beautiful and perfect as it was, there appeared but one of all its works dignified by the possession of a rational and immortal soul, ennobled by the impress of the image and likeness of the Creator; only one able to know him, competent to adore him; and that one, not the workmanship of grace—not plucked as a brand from the burning—not won from hell by the agonies of the Son of God upon the cross, making atonement for its sins. We cannot take time to set out that comparison. We know to which side the host of heaven, who rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, will award the praise of supremacy in

all that is glorious to God and excellent to man. We know which will seem the better and the more wonderful; not that in which order arose out of chaos with the moving of the Spirit of God upon the face of the deep; but that whose first day was ushered in by the descent of the same Spirit upon a world of benighted, and confounded, and ~~upon~~ wandering, and lost immortal minds—to give them “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;” not that creation, in which man appeared as the head of his race, perfect indeed, but capable of sin, and where Satan was permitted to enter, and Adam was ruined by his temptations, and all his race died in his fall; but that second creation in which the first man appeared, not only perfect in his nature, but having that nature in mysterious union with the divine; so that “the second Adam” was no less than “the Lord from heaven,” the head of a new and spiritual race, himself without sin and incapable of sin, encountering Satan, the usurping god of this world, in the height of his kingdom, recovering the lost from his dominion by the sacrifice of himself, purchasing everlasting life for his seed, by paying in his own death the penalty of all the sin which, by the transgression of the first Adam, had cursed mankind—and not resting from his work—not beginning the Sabbath of his Church, till all was so perfect that Satan could never enter its paradise, nor sin defile its purity, nor a single soul ever fall from the image and glory of God.

Now we trust we have prepared your minds to estimate, in some good degree, the interest of that moment in the beginning of the dispensation of the gospel, when the Son of God, having “all power in heaven and earth,” commissioned his ambassadors to go and teach all nations; to introduce them into his church, and bring them to the observance of his commandments. It was a moment equivalent to that in the

forming of the material world when “*God said, let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night.*” It was literally the setting up in the firmament of the new creation those ruling orbs of light, which, receiving the light of the departed Sun of Righteousness, were to communicate it from him to all the world, and in his name to rule over this star-light morning, until He shall appear again to bring the perfect, endless day.

This introduces us to the first question arising out of the text—

*What was the peculiar, characteristic nature of the office which the Apostles were commissioned to exercise?*

The authentic voucher of office is the *commission*. To the commission of the Apostles, then, we must refer you for the distinctive peculiarities of their office. Whatever is not contained therein, either expressly, or by necessary inference, must be considered as not pertaining to the characteristic duties and powers of the Apostles.

Now the Apostles were distinguished by certain circumstantial peculiarities, and certain miraculous gifts. Were these so connected with the apostolic office, as to constitute in any sense its distinguishing features? *They are not mentioned in the commission*, as found in the text. For example, the Apostles were distinguished by the fact that they had seen Christ in the flesh, after his resurrection; but so had many others—“*even five hundred brethren at once.*”<sup>\*</sup> Thus were the Apostles *qualified* to be “witnesses of his resurrection;” but this *qualification* was not their *commission*. It was part of their furniture; but no part of their office. Again: they had been set apart to their office, *by the immediate and visible act of the Saviour*. But Matthias was afterwards numbered with the Apostles;

<sup>\*</sup> 1 Cor: xv. 6.



and Barnabas, and Timothy, and Epaphroditus were Apostles, to whom belonged no such distinction ;\* so that, eminent as was this personal honour, it was not necessary to the designation or place of an Apostle. Again : the Apostles were possessed of miraculous powers. But so were divers others, as Stephen, and Philip, to whom the name of Apostle was never given. It follows, that such endowments were not peculiar, features of the Apostolic office. Essential to its success in those days, they undoubtedly were ; but essential to its nature, they certainly were not. We must not confound *authority* to act, with the *means* of acting successfully ; the *office* of an ambassador, with the force of mind, or the personal endowments with which he sustains his embassy ; the *commission* of one whom the King despatches to subdue and govern a distant province, with the array of martial force with which he marches to the work. No more must the essential office of the Apostles, sent to subdue, and establish, and rule, as ambassadors of Christ, be confounded with those extraordinary endowments and all that striking array of miraculous powers with which they were furnished for their enterprise. Such endowments were needed for the first propagation of the gospel. They have not been needed since. They have therefore ceased. But the essential commission of the Apostles, to which they were appended, has not ceased, nor can cease, while the world lasts ; for Christ

\* Acts, i. 26 ; xiv. 14 : 1 Thess. ii. 6, compared with i. 1 : Philip. ii. 25 ; —“ my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but *your messenger*, (*your apostle*, ὑμῶν ἀπόστολος.) Because Epaphroditus is here called “*your apostle*,” or messenger, no more warrants the inference that St. Paul only meant that he was sent *by the Philippians*, a messenger for a special errand, and not an apostle in the strict sense, than the phrase “*apostle of the Gentiles*” applied to St. Paul, or “*apostle of the circumcision*” applied to St. Peter, authorizes the inference that such only was the office of St. Peter and St. Paul. The Apostleship of Epaphroditus was understood in the strictest and highest sense by the Fathers. Theodoret, writing on the above passage of Philippians calls his office an *episcopate*, just as Peter called that of the Apostles. “*Dictus Philippensium Apostolus a S. Paulo, quid hoc aliud nisi episcopus ?*” Jerome also says that Epaphroditus was called apostle, “*because he also had received the office of being an Apostle among the Philippians.*”

has promised that he will be with that office to the end of the world. That commission was complete as soon as delivered; and from that moment its recipients were invested with all the functions of the Apostolic office. But not so, with regard to miraculous gifts and qualifications. These were not bestowed till many days after the delivery of the commission. It was before the ascension of Christ that the full *authority* of Apostles was bestowed. It was not till the Pentecost that they received "*power* from on high" for the support of that authority.

Thus are we brought again to the question—*What was the peculiar and characteristic nature of the Apostolic office?* They themselves applied to it a name which will aid the answer. Peter, in addressing his brother Apostles concerning the filling of the vacancy caused by the death of Iscariot, expressly styles the office which the traitor had vacated, *his bishopric*, or *his episcopate*, as the original reads. The same is also called, in the same transaction, his *apostleship*. Hence, in the writings of the Fathers, the names of *apostle* and *bishop* are used as pertaining essentially to the same office.\* But the word *bishopric* or *episcopate*, in the abstract, only means an office of *supervision*, in general; and the supervision may be either of single congregations, as in the cases of "the elders" of Ephesus;† or of many congregations, *with their overseers*, as in the case of Paul, who assembled and charged those Elders. What then was the peculiar nature of the supervision, or Episcopate exercised by the Apostles, that *name*, of itself, does not indicate. Whither shall we go to ascertain whether it was a

\* Cyprian writes of the Apostles in that manner; as for example: "*Apostolos, id est Episcopos, Dominus elegit*:"—*The Lord chose Apostles, that is to say, Bishops*. "They which were termed Apostles, as being sent of Christ to publish his gospel throughout the world, and were named Bishops, in that the care of government was also committed to them, did no less perform the offices of their Episcopal authority by governing, than of their Apostolical by teaching."—*Hooker's Eccl. Pol.*

† Acts, xx. 28—*Overseers—Bishops*, ἐπισκόπους.

particular, or a general supervision; congregational, or the contrary? Their commission decides. "*Go and teach all nations,*" &c. Therefore, whatever powers their *Apostleship* or *Episcopate* embraced, were not limited to any particular congregation of the church, but extended to the whole church; in other words, the "Bishopric" in the hands of the Apostles was evidently *general*, as distinguished from *congregational*. What particular functions belonged to that general oversight or Episcopate, their commission leaves no room to doubt. First—"Go and teach all nations;" or as the more accurate and universally preferred translation is—*go and make disciples of all nations*. Thus was given authority to propagate the gospel. "*Baptizing them in the name of the Father,*" &c. Here was authority to administer the sacraments of the church; and by the sacrament of baptism, to open the doors of the church, and of its privileges, to disciples out of all nations. Finally, "*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" These words conveyed to the Apostles the authority *to rule the church*, after they had made disciples by preaching, and members by baptism. An essential part of the government of the church consisted in seeing to the *succession* of its ministry. That the authority to do this, to ordain successors in the ministry, was included among the powers of the Apostles, is not only necessarily implied in their authority to govern, but also in those impressive words of the Saviour: "*As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" For as it was part of the office on which Jesus was sent, to institute the ministry of his church; so, it follows from these words, that it was part of the sending of the Apostles, to continue that ministry, by the ordaining of others to its functions.

The conclusion, then, with regard to the characteristic nature of the apostolic office, is, that it was one

of a *general supervision, or episcopate*; and embraced essentially the authority to preach and propagate the gospel; to administer the sacraments of the church; to preside over its government, and, as a chief part of government, to ordain helpers and successors in the ministry. All these powers the Apostles held, *not as a collective body, or college*; but *severally, and individually*. Hitherto, we have been, so far as I know, upon undisputed ground. Let us proceed.

*This apostolic office was intended by the Saviour to be continued*; in other words, *the first Apostles were intended to have successors, to the end of the world*.

This is undeniably manifest from the promise of the Saviour, annexed to their commission: "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" Now, if neither the *persons* of the Apostles were intended to remain to the end of the world; nor *their miraculous endowments*; nor *their distinguishing office*; if all have passed away; we are quite unable to comprehend how that promise is fulfilled, or what it could have meant. But *the persons* of the first Apostles do not remain. Their *miraculous gifts* have not been continued in the church. It follows then that *their distinguishing office* must remain; that it was to this office, and to those who should hold it in succession, that the Saviour promised his presence "*to the end of the world.*" No other sense can possibly be put on his words. If then the office of the Apostles, as learned from their commission, and interpreted by all the acts of their ministry, was an Episcopate—an office of supervision, and that of a general kind—and if *each* Apostle did embrace in his *individual* office the right to preach, administer the sacraments, exercise supreme jurisdiction in the church, and, under the head of jurisdiction, to ordain and rule ministers of the gospel; it follows that an office of precisely that description was intended to continue; has continued from that time to this; and will be con-



tinued in the church, by the will of its divine Head, to the end of the world.\*

But where shall we find this office in the present church; this union of authority to preach and administer sacraments, *with this individual right to ordain, and this presidency over clergy*; this original, apostolic Episcopate? Evidently, there must be somewhere in the church at the present time, unless the Lord's word has failed, officers, of whom it may be said, without arrogance and in simple deference to the promise of Christ, that in all essential features of the apostolic office, they are *the successors of the Apostles*. Where are they? The question we have no right to treat as unimportant. Whether a most solemn promise of Christ has been fulfilled or not; and if it has, where its fulfilment appears; whether an office, intended by the Head of the church to continue therein, and, as its chief office, to last to the end of time, has continued to the present time; or whether it has been dropped, and some other placed in its stead, is surely a question of no ordinary importance, by no means of a merely incidental consequence; but on the contrary of vital connection with the permanent interests of religion, and not by any to be passed over "unadvisedly or lightly," but considered "reverently, discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of God."

\* In some respects, every Presbyter is a successor of the Apostles, inasmuch as he has authority to preach, to administer the sacraments and to feed or rule, as a pastor, the particular flock over which he is placed. In some respects, neither Bishop, nor Presbyters, are or can be successors of the Apostles, since these "were sent as *chosen eye-witnesses* of Jesus Christ *from whom immediately* they received their whole embassy and their commission to be the *principal first founders of a House of God*, consisting as well of Gentiles as of Jews. In this, there are not after them any other like unto them; and yet the Apostles have now their successors upon earth, their true successors, if not in the largeness, surely in the kind of that Episcopal function, whereby they had power to sit as spiritual ordinary Judges both over Laity and over Clergy, where Christian Churches were established." *Hooker's Eccl. Pol.* viii. § 4.

The peculiarity of the apostolic office to which Presbyters cannot be considered as having succeeded, and to which in the text we have special reference, is that kind of Episcopal function (as Hooker says) "whereby they had power to sit as *spiritual, ordinary Judges*" over clergy as well as laity; in other words to preside, not only over many flocks, but *over the pastors of those flocks* and to ordain those pastors. This was the office of the Apostles, not collectively, but *individually*, and this the Saviour promised to be with "to the end of the world."

But before I further put this question, it is well to remove the idea which so commonly starts up in the minds of those who hear or read on this subject, when any persons holding office in the church of Christ, in the present day, are termed *successors of the Apostles*; are said to have *succeeded to the apostolic office*; as if there were some exceeding arrogance and presumption in the claim. Whether it be arrogant or not, depends entirely upon whether it be true. Nothing is so humble and unpretending as truth. Did any one claim to have succeeded to the *personal* distinctions and endowments—the *inspiration and divers miraculous gifts* by which the Apostles were qualified for their extraordinary circumstances, he would indeed be chargeable with arrogant presumption; because, concerning these things, there was no promise of the Lord that they should continue in the church to the end of the world. But in relation to the *office* of the Apostles, there is the plainest promise of such continuance; and consequently however the assertion may sound, it must be true that somewhere in the church at this time there are office-bearers, either Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons, who *severally*, and in virtue of their office, are successors of the Apostles—occupying, *individually*, just that relation to the present church which the Apostles, by virtue of the essential features of their office, sustained *individually* to the church of their days. The prejudice that arises against such an idea will not bear a moment's reflection. If it spring from a comparison, *as to personal character and fitness*, of the modern successors, with the first in the chain, be it remembered that Judas Iscariot was numbered with the Apostles, by the Saviour himself, and Judas was a traitor. If the prejudice arise from the consideration that the commencement of the Apostles' office was miraculous; that it was under the immediate and extraordinary designation of the Son of God; whereas the continu-

ation of the gospel ministry is by the ordination of men, an ordinary designation, by fallible instruments; we answer by referring you to the analogy between the new creation and the old, in regard to origin and succession. The beginning of the grass of the field was miraculous—by the instant and immediate mandate of God. It was created in full maturity. But its succession was provided for by no such measure. The grass, and the herb, and the fruit tree were furnished with the means of a succession by ordinary laws, each having “*seed in itself, after its kind.*” Thus also with man. The head of the human race was created by the immediate hand of God; but the succession, from that moment to the end of time, was provided for by laws of ordinary nature. But we hold it to be no arrogance to say of any man, though the lowest of his kind, that he has succeeded to the nature of the miraculously created first man; nor to say of the herb of the field that, though it be but the offspring of the little, familiar seed in the ground, which sprang and grew by an ordinary law and a human planting and rearing, it is nevertheless, in all the essentials of its nature, the successor, in an unbroken line of descent, of the herb which, on the third day of the world, sprang into maturity at the wonderful fiat of the Almighty. I know not that the man, or the herb, is any the less a man, or an herb, or any the less descended from the miraculous beginnings of the creation, because the laws of growth were but ordinary and the intermediate agency of production was but human. And so I know not that a minister of the Gospel is any the less a successor of the first Apostles, because instead of receiving his authority, like them, immediately from Christ, it has come to him by the intermediate communication of a chain fastened, at its beginning, upon the throne of God, and preserved as inviolate, as the line of the descent of Adam, or the succession of seed time and har-

vest, of day and night, of summer and winter. I know not that this day is not a true day, and strictly a successor of that very day, when first the sun appeared; though that, you know, was made by the sudden act of God suspending the sun in the skies, and this arose by the ordinary succession of the evening and the morning. The beginning of every institution of God must of necessity be extraordinary; its regular continuance—ordinary. So with the course of Providence in all its branches. What is now an ordinary Providence, was once an extraordinary. What began with miracle, is continued by laws of familiar nature. And so is it with the ministry of the Gospel. What was created by the direct ordination of God, is propagated and continued by the authorised ordination of men. *Its "seed is in itself, after its kind,"* and at every step of the succession it is precisely the same ministry and just as much of God, sanctioned by his authority and sustained by his power, as if it had been received from the laying of the hands of Christ himself. And so with the office of the Apostles. It was the promise of Christ, the Lord, that it should continue to the end of the world. It is not more sure that sun and moon, seed time and harvest will continue to the end of the world; and though its succession be now in the hands of very feeble and fallible men; of men unspeakably inferior to the Apostles in every personal and official qualification; yea, though many Iscariots be found under its awful responsibilities, the integrity of *the office*, as essentially identical with that of the Apostles, is in no wise affected.

That the office of the Apostles *did* descend from them to successors; that it *was* communicated to others, by the hands of those who received it from the Lord, is manifest. For not to mention Matthias and Barnabas, who were apostles,\* we find Timothy, who

\* Acts xiv. 14.



was ordained by St. Paul,\* not only called an Apostle, by that writer, as he is called Bishop by writers of the next century, but actually charged by St. Paul with the exercise of all the authority we have mentioned as contained in the Apostolic commission. The first epistle to Timothy is the plainest evidence that he was put in trust with the government of the Church of Ephesus; which at that time, as the Acts of the Apostles declare,† contained a *plurality of Presbyters*; that *over those Presbyters*, as well as over the Deacons, and laity, he was invested with the personal charge of discipline and government; and that, in discharging such government, the *authority to ordain* was distinctly in his single hands.‡ The same is evident concerning Titus, from the Epistle of St. Paul to him. It was his charge from St. Paul to “set in order” all the churches of the large island of Crete, and “ordain Presbyters in every city.” Thus we see the office of the Apostles handed down by a succession of hands to one of the latest dates of which the scriptures speak. It certainly continued in the world as long as the life time of the Apostle St. John; and he lived to the hundredth year of the Christian era. Did it continue any longer than that hundredth year?

We ask who were those “*Angels*” or messengers of the seven Churches of Asia, to whom the seven Epistles of the book of Revelation were addressed; called also “*the seven stars*” in the right hand of the Lord; held responsible for the whole Church embraced within the limits of those several extensive cities, with their

\* 2 Timothy, i. 6.

† 1 Timothy, i. 3; Acts, xx. 17, &c.

‡ See especially chap. iii. ; and iv. 17, 19, 22. It is of no force to say that the Presbyters of Ephesus and of Crete, are called in the Epistles to Timothy, and Titus, *Bishops*. Of this we have no doubt. That was not a *specific name of office*, till after the Apostolic age. The highest rank of the ministry had then the title of Apostle. We go by *office*, more than *name*. That Timothy and Titus had the *powers* attributed to the Apostles’ office, is granted on the other side of this question. The plea is that they were officers *extraordinary*. But it is only a plea.

suburban dependancies?\* Of one of them, Ephesus, we know from Acts, xx. 17, &c. that *some forty years before the Book of Revelations was written*, it had several Presbyters, and of course, several congregations.—Who then was the Angel of that church of Ephesus? What was his office? Evidently it was one of *Presidency*; and that, over clergy, as well as laity. The most learned and noted non-episcopal writers contend that it was the office of President *for life*.

The learned Blondel, whose authority on this subject is not excelled by that of any non-episcopal writer, contends that the Angels of the seven churches were “*exarchs* or chief governors,” who were superior in office to *the other clergy* of those churches; held their places *for life*, and were so superior that “*the acts of the church, whether glorious or infamous, were imputed to those exarchs.*” And this, he says, is necessary to be maintained, otherwise the difficulties are insuperable.† If such was the office of the Angel of one of the seven churches, it must have been that of the Angels of all the others; and as we have no reason to suppose that the government of those seven churches was not similar to that of all others, such must have been the office of the chief ministers of the whole Christian community, in the latter days of the Apostle St. John. This leaves us but little to contend for. But it is not disputed that to those Angels was appropriated, during their life-time, the title of *Bishops*, as a distinctive title of their special office. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who personally knew and conversed with St. John, writing to the church of Ephesus, not more than

\* Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Laodicea were, according to Pliny, κεφαλὰὶ διοικήσεως, *heads of the diocese*, in regard to secular jurisdiction. The Church of Ephesus embraced what Ephesus, in the common language of that day, was known to embrace, viz. the city proper and the “*regio suburbicaria*,” the suburban and dependant villages: precisely as when we now speak in common phrase of London, we include all the connected villages of Camberwell, Peckham, Hackney, &c. &c.

† Blondel’s Apology. Blondel wrote this work at the earnest request of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Such an acknowledgment, therefore, is of no common value.

twelve years after St. John had addressed the Angel of that church, in the book of Revelations, expressly says that Onesimus was then its Bishop." "*Who* (he says) *according to the flesh is your Bishop.*" So that not only did the essential *presidency*, but the *name* also, of Bishop belong to the chief officers in the church of that early period. It is beyond question that the Fathers regarded those Angels of churches as having been *diocesan Bishops*.\* Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who wrote about the year 178, speaking of Polycarp, his own teacher and a disciple of St. John, and certainly the Angel of the church of Smyrna, calls him Bishop of that church; and that he used the title as designating a Bishop *in the strict sense*, is manifest from the fact that, by almost universal consent, diocesan Episcopacy, in the strict sense, was general in the time when he wrote. And could Irenæus be mistaken as to the office of Polycarp, *whose disciple he was?*

But that these Presidents for Life, entitled Angels of churches, in the scriptures, and Bishops, by contemporaneous ecclesiastical writers, who dwelt in the midst of diocesan Episcopacy, were regarded as *successors of the Apostles* by the Christian ministry of their own age, we have the plainest and most unquestionable evidence. Irenæus, we have said, was a disciple of Polycarp, who was the Angel and Bishop of the church of Smyrna, and a personal disciple of St. John. Thus was Irenæus too near the Apostles to be mistaken as to their successors. "We can enumerate (he says) those who were appointed by the Apostles, Bishops in the churches, and to be *their successors* even unto us,—leaving them *the same power and authority which they had.*"†

This same primitive writer has left on record the succession of those who had been bishops of the church

\* As Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Eusebius, &c.

† *Advers. Hæres.* lib. iii., c. 3.

of Rome down to his time of writing, viz. about seventy-eight years from St. John. The first named is Linus; the last, whom he calls "*the twelfth in order from the Apostles*," is Eleutherius.\* He calls both by the same name of Bishop, without the least indication that the office of the one *whom Paul instituted*, was in the least dissimilar from that of the other, who was *twelfth* in the descent. Now it is generally granted that the office of the latter was that of a *diocesan* Bishop, in the present, customary sense. What then are we obliged to infer as to the office of the former; and consequently as to the nature of the office received by the primitive churches from the hands of the Apostles?

We might exceedingly multiply quotations to the same effect. But it is sufficiently shown that in the age next succeeding that of the Apostles, there were officers called Bishops in the church, who were considered then as *successors of the Apostles*, and as having received from them *the same power and authority that they had*. And how those officers came to have appropriated to them exclusively the name of Bishop, which at first was not peculiar to the highest grade of the ministry, instead of the older name of Apostles, Theodoret, a Christian writer, who flourished only about two hundred years after those times, informs us. "Those now called Bishops (he says) were anciently called Apostles. But in process of time, the name of Apostle was left to them who were truly Apostles, and the name of bishop was restrained to those who were anciently called Apostles." Thus we learn that a special reverence for

\* "The Apostles having founded the church of Rome, (says Irenæus,) committed the Bishopric to Linus. Of this Linus, Paul maketh mention in his epistles to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus: after him and in the third place from the Apostles, the Bishopric devolved upon Clemens, who also had seen the Apostles and conferred with them. This Clemens was succeeded by Euarestus, and Euarestus by Alexander. Afterwards Xystus, the 6th from the Apostles was constituted bishop, and next Telesiphorus, who afterwards glorified God by martyrdom. Then followed Hyginus, and after him Pius, whose successor was Anicetus, who was followed by Soter, and now this station is filled by Eleutherius, twelfth in order from the Apostles."



the first Apostles, was the cause of the leaving of that name to them, and calling their successors by another.

I cannot take time to proceed any further with a quotation of testimony. We have found the promise of the Saviour as to the continuance of the Apostolic office, evidently fulfilled in the age next to that of the last of the Apostles. The facility of proving the same of subsequent periods, rapidly increases as we descend the enlarging tide of Christian men and things;\* till we come to the period of only one hundred and fifty years from the death of St. John, (the age of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage,) when non-episcopal writers, who concede the least, acknowledge that the church, without a known exception, was presided over by diocesan Bishops, who exercised the prerogatives, and were then considered, without a question, to have succeeded to the full office of the Apostles. Whether it be left for the nineteenth century, to correct the universal belief of the church, in an age so soon after the last of the twelve Apostles, on a matter of plain historical tradition, concerning which it is quite unintelligible that the learned should then have been ignorant, I must leave others to decide.

We shall conclude our remarks on the question whether an office such as that of the Apostles has been in the church since the Apostles' times, with but one more aspect of the matter. It is notorious that at this present day, about eleven-twelfths of those called Christians in the world, are under the spiritual jurisdiction of an order of ministers, called Bishops, whose individual office embraces the essential particulars of that of the Apostles, and whose succession they regard as derived by an unbroken chain from Apostolic times.

\* Tertullian of the 2d century, in answer to certain heretics, writes: "Let them recite their Bishops, one by one, each in such sort succeeding other, that the first Bishop of them have had for his author and predecessor some Apostle, or at least some apostolic person, who persevered with the Apostles. For so apostolical churches are wont to bring forth the evidence of their estates. So doth the church of Smyrna, having Polycarp, whom John did consecrate."

It is quite notorious that, from the sixteenth century, up to within one hundred and fifty years of the last of the Apostles, the whole church, in all lands, was under such jurisdiction. We go higher, and say that the most eminent non-episcopal writers acknowledge, that within *sixty* years of the death of St. John, such was the government of the church.\* And, within this short period, we have shown you the testimony of writers who then lived, asserting that Bishops were then exercising the jurisdiction of the churches, and were considered, without the moving of a question, as having succeeded to the office of the Apostles. Now suppose this were a mere mistake. Then the mistake must have arisen *within the life-time of men who had conversed with the contemporaries of the Apostles*; for after their death it was in full operation; and this, a mistake, not concerning a trivial circumstance of the church, but a main and fundamental feature in its constitution, government and discipline; and this immensely important mistake must have spread *so rapidly and powerfully*, as to have revolutionized the government of the church of all lands, in the course of some sixty years after the death of St. John—and *so silently*, that history has preserved not the slightest trace of its beginning and progress—and *so perfectly and universally*, that though the scriptures were daily read in the churches, and Presbyters and laity were made of the same materials as they are now, none perceived the usurpation; but all took it for granted, without a question, that such had been the government of the

\* *Blondel* acknowledges that episcopacy was introduced before Tertullian wrote his work on Baptism, which he dates A. D. 197. He thinks the change was made at Jerusalem about 135 or 6; at Alexandria about 143; at Rome about 140. In the Appendix to the work on the ministry, issued by the Presbyterian Provincial Assembly of London, in 1654, we read thus; "Dr. Blondel, a man of great learning and reading, undertakes in a large discourse, to make out that before the year 140, there was not a Bishop set over Presbyters; to whose elaborate writings we refer the reader for further satisfaction in this particular." We might say, then, that leading non-episcopal writers virtually acknowledge the introduction of episcopacy, as early as *forty years* after St. John. *Sixty* will answer our purpose.

church from the beginning, and was to be, to the end of the world ; and this mistake *so permanent*, that without a dream of its being else than the most unquestionable truth, it continued till the sixteenth century entirely unsuspected. Now, if we can believe this, what vital mistakes may we not suppose to have been made, just as easily, and just as silently, in other great interests of Christianity? If the whole church, so near its first ages, was capable of such an egregious blunder, in a plain matter of fact and of daily observation ; if the whole form and principle of her primitive government could be so silently, and suddenly, and universally subverted, and the very opposite be so silently, and suddenly, and universally inaugurated in its stead, as that no one was conscious of the process of change ; and no part of the Christian community, even in the most distant regions, continued as they had been originally constituted ; and none rose up to vindicate the claims of the primitive government as abandoned, and to complain of its intrusive substitute : if such a complete revolution can be believed to have taken place in the Priesthood of the Christian Temple, and so secretly, that neither friend nor foe, advocate nor complainant, heathen, heretic nor Jew is known to have observed it ; what change may not as well be supposed to have occurred, quite as easily, quite as silently, and quite as unobserved, in the precious oracles, the Books of Holy Scripture, deposited in that Temple, and specially entrusted to the guardianship of that Priesthood? I know not that it is any easier to revolutionize, unnoticed, the whole form and character of a government, than it is to change, unnoticed, its very statute books. If the former has been done ; how do we know that the latter has not been also? We know it has not, by the testimony, unbroken, of the church, from century to century. But why is not that testimony as valid in one case as the other? Why not believe it,



as well when it proves the unbroken descent of the Apostolic office, as when it witnesses to the canonical books of holy Scripture? How can we suspect the Fathers of the church, when they testify of the former; without rendering their testimony suspicious, when they speak of the latter; yea, without casting entire doubtfulness into the whole region of historic testimony? The care of the church to preserve the Scriptures inviolate, is no more manifest in the history of Christianity, than her watchful care, in all ages and countries, and now, even among the long wasted and oppressed Christians of oriental nations, to guard the descent of the apostolic office. This unsleeping watch over the preservation in each diocese, of an original, independant Episcopacy, wanting and allowing no common and infallible Head, but “the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls,” “*who is God over all;*” has been the chief barrier that has prevented, in the ancient churches of the East and elsewhere, the entire ascendancy of the Papal usurpation. As the system of our several state governments, united in one civil confederacy, each having its own chief governor, is the real protection of our liberties, and of our union, against the entire consolidation of the whole nation into one exclusive jurisdiction, under one supreme Ruler, and he mounting the higher in power, as his footing should become the more consolidated and extended, till at last such an expedient for *more unity*, proves itself the very fountain-head of the wildest and most destructive divisions:—so have been the several diocesan governments of the universal church; each with its own spiritual head; each a government within itself, though in harmonious confederacy with others; each watching with sacred care the valid descent of its Episcopate, from the only source of all spiritual authority; so has been always this primitive constitution of the church, where it has been faithfully maintained, not only the



wisest and strongest protection of her unity, but every where, in proportion as it has been jealously guarded, has it held up the ensign of stern and victorious resistance to the usurping claims of him, whom the prophecy of the Scriptures describes as "*sitting as God, in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*"\* The grand scheme of that singular Potentate has always been, while graciously permitting the name and shew of Bishops and dioceses, to reduce all into abject dependance on his own infallible will; he taking the place, as he calls himself the alone Vicegerent, of Christ, the invisible Head; and thus seeking to reduce all office and citizenship in the universal church, into one consolidated mass of united confusion. It was this boasted expedient for the greater unity, which produced, on one part, the revolt of Protestantism, and on all others, is fast sinking the mass, by dead weight, as recently in atheistical France, into the gulf of an infidel and raging anarchy. Such is the scheme of Satan, against which the Protestant ensign of our parent church was lifted up, and the old dioceses of oriental Christendom, have been for centuries contending. This it was that kindled the persecutions of the English Reformation, and burned to death those venerable Bishops of Christ, Crammer, and Latimer, and Ridley, and Hooper; not to mention the many confessors of lower place, but of equal faith and constancy. Had they only acknowledged the *supremacy of the Pope*, they might have died in their beds.†

Now, my brethren, before we pass to the concluding head of this discourse, let me say that if the subject on which we have been speaking has seemed to you to be less practical and useful than some that might have been appropriately selected, we beg you to bear in mind that it stands in the front of our text, and in the front of the service of our church, for the consecration

\* 2 Thess. ii. 4.

† See Appendix.

which you are presently to witness; that not only is it declared by our Lord, in the former that, *to the end of* the dispensation of the gospel, the office of which we have been speaking, shall continue in the world; but by our church also, at the commencement of her ordination services, that *from the beginning* of that dispensation, such an office has been in the world;\* and consequently, in justice to the church, and in justice to the promise of her great Head, and in justice to our own sense of the importance of the topic, we could not, on such an occasion as this, bestow on the subject we have been considering a less respectful attention. We have taken good care, while speaking the doctrine of our own church, with all plainness, to avoid all reflections upon those parts of protestant Christendom, with which, on this head, we are sorry to differ.

We speak now of an aspect of our text, on which our affections lead us with far more pleasure to dwell. *The precious encouragement for the ministry*, contained in the promise of the Saviour: "LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE WORLD."

This promise is to the Ministry of the Gospel, what the mystic breast-plate, with its twelve precious stones, each representing a tribe of Israel, was to the High Priest of the Jews, when he stood as the Messenger between the people and the mercy-seat. It is our "*Urim and Thummim*;" our *light* and *perfection*. We wear its celestial jewelry upon our breasts as Ministers and Ambassadors of God. Under its varied encouragements, more precious than rubies, we go to our divine Lord and Head for counsel and strength. Under its divine protection, brighter and more impenetrable than a shield of diamonds, we go against the world and the devil.

\* "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been three orders of Ministers, in Christ's church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons."—*Preface to the Ordinal*.

To understand how this promise must have sounded to the Apostles, you must recollect the peculiar nature of the work entrusted to their charge. You must consider that under the commission to go, and teach, and disciple, and baptize all nations, and bring them into subjection to the commands of Christ, was embraced no less than the charge to go and be the instruments of creating anew the moral and spiritual character of all mankind. You are to consider the dreadful chaos of iniquity, into which the whole race of man was sunk; what darkness was on the face of that deep; and how the mighty spirit of that darkness did then move upon the face of that deep, glorying in the wreck of a once beautiful creation, as his own master-piece; reigning with absolute sway in the children of disobedience, and ever begetting new forms of apostacy, and forging new fetters upon the minds of men. Oh! what a work of infinite importance to break off those fetters; to wrest the dominion of human souls from that giant Prince; to new-create in an exiled and ruined race the lost image of the Creator, and so restore them to his communion and his kingdom.

But this, by the appointment of infinite wisdom, was to be done by *human* agents. The power was Christ's; but means, in *human* hands alone, would he work by. The word of God, by which light, in the beginning, was made to shine out of darkness, was to be the great ordinance, for the restoration of man to the light of life, and whatever else had been lost by the fall. But the stewardship of that word, was to be committed, not to a ministry of angels, but of weak and sinful men. It is as much the economy of this new creation, that the light of life, and all order, and beauty, and blessing of holiness shall not spread over the earth, without the agency and continued activity of an instituted and permanent ministry of *men*; as it was of the first creation, that there should be no regu-

lar process of day and night, of summer and winter, without a permanent ministry of *sun and stars*. But when the Apostles contemplated such an infinite task, such an overwhelming trust, such frightening responsibility, such enemies to vanquish, such sufferings to endure, such dangers to brave, such mountains to level, how must they have been ready to exclaim—who are we that we should thus go against a world, and do all this great work? So said Moses, when his work was far less. And the divine Lord and Head of that dispensation answered him: “*Certainly I will be with thee.*” The same were His words at the beginning of the next and the more mighty dispensation. All the rising fears of the Apostles were hushed when they heard—“*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*” It was enough. They tarried in Jerusalem, till the promised Spirit had descended, by whose continued agency their departed Lord had told them he would make his presence known to their hearts, and felt in the power of their ministry. Then did they “receive power from on high; and then with new eyes did they read again the promise of the Lord. “Yes;” must their triumphant spirits have exclaimed, “the Lord has gone out of our sight, but we are never out of his. The church sees him no more, but his eye is continually upon the church. He went, that he might sit at the right hand of power, and be head over all things to his people; and reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Thence he continually speaks to us: ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Ye are my ambassadors. Ye speak in my stead. I speak by you. Fear not. Ye are weak—I am mighty. I will be glorified in enabling you to do all things through my grace which strengtheneth you. Hated of all men for my sake shall ye be; brought before rulers and kings, and betrayed by kinsfolk and friends. Opposed by all the combined powers of human wickedness—but



I am with you. The hosts of hell, leagued with all the wicked and mighty among men, will fight against your cause, and heap on you disgrace, and misery, and death. But I am with you, and none of these things shall hurt you. I am with you in the wilderness and the city, in the calm and the storm and the furnace, in hunger and thirst and nakedness. I will make your nerves brass, and your shoes iron. What you plant, I will rear. What you seal, I will execute. Your words shall be my words. When ye preach the word, I will add the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Ye are indeed but earthen vessels. But therefore have I chosen you, in the furnace of iron, to receive my hid treasures of grace, and scatter them over the world, that the excellency of the power may, in the sight of all the world, be the more evidently of me.”—They went in the name of the Lord, “strong in the power of his might.” And this, brethren, is the whole account of the wonderfully rapid and triumphant propagation of the gospel. “Kings of the earth *did* set themselves, and the rulers took counsel against the Lord and against his Anointed.” Hell opened wide its gates, and poured out its legions and floods against the Apostles and their helpers and successors. But the work of new-creation went on, like the progress of “the morning light, which shineth more and more towards the perfect day.” The image of God was renewed in millions, who became “new creatures in Christ Jesus;”—and the only explanation of the great wonder was, not in the feeble Apostles and their feeble helpers, or any thing visible; but in the promise of the “Lord God Omnipotent”—“*I am with you always.*”

Nothing but the faithfulness of the Lord to this promise, accounts for the subsequent propagation of vital and holy Christianity, in one single inch of its progress. Nothing else accounts for the preservation of the church, and of the unbroken succession of a

faithful ministry to the present time. Wherever his ambassadors have kept to their instructions and been faithful to their commission, Christ has stood at their right hand, and they, by his grace strengthening them, have kept the guard of the church, fought her battles, and died at her standards. How beautifully is this exhibited, for the assurance of all generations, in that chapter of the Book of Revelation, where St. John describes his vision of the Lord Jesus, as appearing in glory; arrayed in splendid vestments, as High Priest of his church; continually ministering to its flocks and Pastors.\* He was seen “*in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*”—which he himself then interpreted as emblems of the *churches*. But candlesticks, though of the most fine gold, have in themselves no light. How then do the churches, signified by them, shine as lights? “I saw, (saith St. John) and he had in his right hand *seven stars*, and out of his mouth went a two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” And what were those stars? The Lord interpreted—“*The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.*” Now we understand! While the candlesticks represent the churches, *the stars* are the *ministry* of the churches, set up by the Lord Jesus in the firmament of this new creation. The day is not yet; because the second advent of Christ is not yet. It is a star-light morning still. The church is enlightened, indeed, from the face of the Sun of Righteousness, and by the word of life which proceedeth out of his mouth; but, as yet, by the sun beyond the veil, through an intermediate agency of ministering servants. He holdeth them in his right hand, as the sun holds the planets in their orbits. Dark in themselves, they shine upon the church, only as he shines upon them and as they obey his commandments. Once out of the circle of his light and attraction, they become but as dross

\* Rev. i. 12—20.

and tin. And it is just because he thus holds his ministry in his right hand, while he walks invisibly among the churches, shining upon these, through them, that the light of the gospel has not been, and cannot be, put out by the devices of Satan. Its "life is hid with Christ in God," so that the gates of hell can never prevail against his church, however they may be sometimes permitted to drive her into the wilderness, and compel her witnesses to prophecy in sackcloth.

Now, brethren, it is under the light of that vision of St. John, that the ministry holds its orbit and trims its light, to-day, as well as in the beginning of the gospel. If the office of the present chief-ministers be the same essentially as that of the Apostles, so is their fallen and helpless nature essentially the same. Nor is the promise of the Lord to be with them any the less certain; nor the right hand of the Lord to uphold them any the less mighty; nor his countenance any the less glorious sun to shine upon them, and through them upon the churches. Time has wrought no change in the relations of Christ to his church. He has gone no further away from her necessities. Still sitteth he on the throne, head over all things to his people. Still is he the Pastor of the flock; the Head of the household; walking, as Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, in the midst of the churches, holding up his intermediate ministry, so that none shall pluck them out of his hand. Times have changed, indeed, since the days of the Apostles; but no change has taken place in the absolute dependance of the ministry upon such consolation as this. Still is the world a most wicked world; still does a grievous night oppress and a horrible chaos reign over an immense portion of the globe. Still is it the command, "*Go and disciple all nations;*" and, as much as ever, must that conversion be wrought in any corner of the earth, as well as all over the earth, only by the word of God, *preached by men*. And oh! how

far has that mighty change to be advanced, ere the ministry can surrender back its commission to him who gave it, and that Sabbath begin, when the secondary lights shall vanish because of the perfect day, and the Lord Christ shall minister alone, and every eye shall see him. Meanwhile, as that day of final and perfect victory over the kingdom of darkness draweth nigh, the devices of Satan increase, and the rage of the lion, soon to be spoiled of his prey, becomes the more furious. "Wo to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea." (saith the Spirit,) "for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath; because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."\* We expect the conflict to thicken, as the enemy grows more desperate. We expect infidelity to spread, and self-called *neutrals* to fall into its ranks, as Satan becomes more furious, and recruits to his host are more needed. We look that the ready-made infidel will declaim the more boldly, and boast himself more fiercely, against the Lord, as the time of his King is brief, and the subjects must be up and doing. But so much the more call upon the ministry of Christ; so much the more to alarm them of little faith; so much the more fearful responsibility upon those, who, having succeeded to the peculiar stewardship of the Apostles, have also succeeded to the duty of special devotedness, and labour, and sacrifice, and courage, and patience, and faith. Jesus gave them their special lesson, when he washed the Apostles' feet. He meant, by that symbolic act, that as they were the chief in office, so, like their Lord, were they required to be chief in readiness for the most humble services and the heaviest crosses, in bringing the souls of sinful men to that heavenly washing, without which they can have no part in him. It is laid upon them as the price and privilege of their special commission, to be ready to perform the greatest labour, take

\* Rev. xii. 12.



the widest circuits, encounter the severest hardships, make the most painful sacrifices of the sweets of home and family; be the chief Missionaries; and, like the work to which this our dear brother is now called, be pioneers of the church, searching the wilderness, boring into the quarry, diving into the chaos for materials with which to build up the living temple of Christ. Such, literally, were Bishops of the first centuries. When persecutions arose, the first mark of the archer was the head-shepherd of the fold. When the Lord demanded "examples of suffering affliction and of patience," for the encouragement of the weak, it was the Bishop of the church who walked out to the rack and the stake, rejoicing that to him it was given, "not only to believe in the name of Christ, but also to suffer for his sake." Yea, for a long time, in many parts of the church, the succession of the office might be tracked by the crimsoned footsteps of incumbents, who had followed Jesus to prison and to death. The heraldry of this order is blazoned nobly in the annals of the martyrs. Such be the spirit universally pervading it. It is the only spirit that can mount to the height of its duties. The time may not be very far distant, when it shall be called to rehearse some of its ancient testimonies. At any rate, such alone is the spirit appropriate to its mission. Is it desirable that the sacred anointing of a holy devotedness to Christ may flow down the garments of the church, to the extremities of the body? Then let us pray that it may be poured out richly upon the highest rank of the Priesthood. Let Bishops be ready to be seen walking in the furnace of trial, and bearing the cross of heavy duty, that the congregation may be seen the more faithfully refusing to bow the knee to this world's idols, and making great sacrifices for conscience void of offence, and for growth in grace.

Oh! then, since this is our calling, and since our appointed strength and consolation are all embraced in the Saviour's promise; how vital to this office is a living, practical, simple, abiding faith; the faith that knows how to embrace the promises and never let them go; the faith that can make them a pillow of down in weariness, and a nerve of steel in weakness; the faith that can take up this one promise of Christ, and carry it for a shield into the battle, for a lamp into the darkness, for a cruse of the unfailing "oil of gladness" into the desert; the faith that can erect our hearts on this promise, as upon a rock in the deep, and dwell in it, as an ark in the deluge, and use it, as a two-edged sword, against the world, the flesh and the devil; yea, the faith that can walk through this wilderness, "as seeing Him who is invisible," even Jesus at the right hand of God, ever confessing, ever interceding for, ever helping and comforting, those who put their trust in him. *Lord, increase our faith!* The greater victories of the gospel wait for a stronger faith in its ministers. *Lord, increase our faith!* The brighter glory of the church waits for a more vigorous faith in all her members. *Lord, increase our faith!*

It is time this discourse were closed. But you will indulge me, brethren, with a moment to say a few words to him whose consecration to the office of Missionary Bishop is now to take place. You can little conceive with what a special and most affectionate interest, the speaker will participate in this solemnity. A little of it may be explained by the following brief relation.

It is now nearly thirteen years since a very remarkable work of grace occurred, in the Military Academy of the United States. During a condition of almost universal indifference to religion and of wide-spread infidelity, against which the efforts of the ministry of one man, set for the defence of the gospel, seemed

for a long time to make not the least way; suddenly almost, in a very few days, many minds, without communication with one another, and without personal intercourse with the Minister, appeared deeply, and almost simultaneously interested in the great matters of eternal life. Officers as well as cadets participated in this, and to such an extent, that the minister's study was soon occupied every evening with assemblies, composed of both, for prayer and the exposition of the Word of God; and a serious impression, more or less deep and abiding, was spread over a large part of the whole military community. Several became at that period very decided soldiers of Christ. Many others received impressions then, which God has since ripened into manifest and energetic piety. Many more received the seed of the word, in whom, though it seemed to die, it has since, under the continued influence of the Spirit, sprung up and brought forth fruit. Some are still in military life. Others have been, long since, adorning the Christian profession in the ministry of the gospel.

The very first appearance of this work of grace, so remarkably and singularly the work of God, was the coming of a cadet, alone and most unexpectedly, to introduce himself to the Chaplain, and unburthen the sorrows of a contrite heart. All around him was coldness and scepticism. To speak decidedly in favour of religion, was then so unusual in the Academy that it made one singular. To converse with the Chaplain on that subject, had not yet been ventured by any, except out of opposition to the truth. That any would appear there seriously seeking eternal life, even the Chaplain was afraid to hope. But the darkest of the night is nearest the dawn. A cadet did venture to come, in open day, to the Chaplain's study, too deeply concerned to heed what would be said of him. He was personally unknown to the Chaplain. His

message he tried to utter, but could not. Again he tried, and again; but the heart was too full for speech. At length it was: "*tell me what must I do—I have come about my soul. I know not what I want—I am entirely in the dark. What must I seek? where must I go?*" Such was the first declaration of one who for some days, had been awakened under the preaching and reading of the truth. A sermon preached on the Scriptures, and a tract, sent at a venture, from the Chaplain's study to whomsoever it might meet, had been blessed to his soul.\* Doubts and cavils were all abandoned. Implicit submission seemed his engrossing principle. From that moment, the young man appeared to take up the cross, and to stand decidedly and boldly on the Lord's side. The singular and very prominent evidence of the hand of God in this case, was very greatly blessed to others. By and by, he professed Christ in the sacrament of Baptism, which was administered to him, with others, recently turned to the Lord, in the chapel of the Military Academy, and in presence of all the corps. After graduating at that institution and leaving the army, he passed through a regular course of study for the holy ministry, and was successively ordained Deacon and Presbyter. Many years have since elapsed. The Chaplain has since been called to a higher order in the ministry, and more

\* The tract was sent by a cadet, who in obedience to the request of a pious father, of whose death he had just heard, had come to introduce himself to the Chaplain. He was not then of a serious mind in religion. A tract was put into his hand for himself; another, as bread upon the waters, with the direction, "*drop it any where in the barracks; perhaps I shall hear from it.*" He smiled, promised compliance, and dropped it, unseen, in the room of his friend, the cadet above named. That day, a week, the chaplain *heard from it*, as related in the discourse. But still he who dropped it was not known to care for his soul. The other, having learned from the Chaplain to what cadet he was so indebted, put a pious book in his way—(Gregory's Letters.) Soon they were in prayer together in private. Soon, he who was first in Christ presented the other, as one seeking the peace of God, at the place where the prayers of cadets were then wont to be made, (the Chaplain's study.) One of them is now a Bishop; the other, a most beloved minister of the Gospel, well known as the devoted and successful Pastor of one of the largest flocks of the Diocese of Virginia.

The Letters of Olinthus Gregory, LL. D., on the Evidences, Doctrines and Duties of Christianity, were of eminent use at that time. The American Edition was published, at the Chaplain's instance for that meridian.



enlarged responsibilities in the church. The Cadet, meanwhile, after many vicissitudes of active duty and of disabling ill health, supposed he had settled himself for the rest of his life, as a preacher and pastor to an humble and obscure congregation of negroes, whom he had collected together from neighbouring plantations; to whom, living entirely upon his own pecuniary means, he appropriated a part of his own house for a church, and to whose eternal interests he had chosen cheerfully and happily to devote himself, as their spiritual father, with no emolument but their salvation. But such was just the true spirit for the highest of all vocations in the church. To be a servant of servants, is the very school in which to prepare for the chief ministry under him who took on him the form of a servant. The church needed a Missionary Bishop for a vast field, for great self-denial, for untiring patience, for courageous enterprize. Her eye was directed to the self-appointed pastor of that humble congregation. With most impressive unanimity did she call him away, to a work, not indeed of more dignified duty, but of more eminent responsibility; not indeed, of more exquisite satisfaction to a Christian's heart, (for what can give a true Christian heart more exquisite satisfaction, than to lead such of the poor to Christ?) but of severer trials, and vastly greater difficulties and hardships. Counting the cost, he has not dared to decline it. Regarding the call as of God, he has embraced the promised grace, and is now ready to be offered. And thus the Chaplain has here met the beloved Cadet again, seeing and adoring the end of the Lord in that remarkable beginning; and now, with unspeakable thankfulness to God, for what he here witnesses, may he say to this candidate, elect, for labour and sacrifice, in the words of St. Paul to *his* beloved disciple:

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Endure hardness as a good

soldier of Jesus Christ. And the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." I call you *Son*, in affectionate recollection of the past. I call you *Brother* now, in affectionate consideration of the present and the future. Dear, beloved brother, I see plainly in prospect the hardness you are to endure. I mean not, hardness to the body. Of this, indeed, you will have no lack in your wide circuits of travel and labour. But this is not the cross I speak of. Hardness to the spirit, I mean; trials of patience, and faith, and love, and meekness; trials of the heart, painful and constant,—such as Jesus knew so acutely, because his spirit was so pure, his heart so tender, his sense of the hateful-ness of sin so deep—trials, such as you will feel acutely, in proportion as you attain towards the purity and elevation of the mind of your dear Master. But "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Be ever looking unto him, glorious Captain of your salvation!—ever considering him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; have in him the simple confidence of a good soldier; show the implicit obedience, the patient watchfulness, the intrepid zeal, the entire devotedness of a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Your strength is all in him. It is enough. Use it. It waits your call. Draw upon that right hand of power till you are "*strong in the Lord*." Carry the spirit of the pastor of that congregation of slaves, the spirit of a servant of servants, into the highest walks of your office. A ruler by commission; be always the servant of all in spirit and in work. Wash the disciples' feet. Do any thing to bring sinners to the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Count all things but loss, that the lost may "win Christ and be found in

him." Be yourself an example of the plainest, the most pointed, distinct, earnest and constant preaching of Christ. This, and the raising up and sending out of others to the same work, is the high vocation to which you are called. Strive to surround yourself with a ministry after this pattern; a ministry of men schooled in the experience of the preciousness of Christ; schooled in the mind of Christ; taught of God how to set him forth to the consciences and hearts, to the wants, and fears, and woes of this lost and blinded race. "Lay hands suddenly on no man." Aim indeed at a numerous ministry, because absolutely needed. Aim, infinitely more, at a ministry full of the Holy Ghost; knowing Christ, teaching Christ, following Christ; ready to endure all things for Christ and his kingdom. When difficulties thicken, and helpers are few, and the wilderness is dark and dry, remember that you do not minister to others without being ministered unto; *you* have a "*Good Shepherd*"—out of sight—but always near; ever holding you with his right hand. Jesus ministereth to you. Let him minister. Open your whole soul to the working of his silent, all-subduing ministry. It will lift up your heart, and fill you with peace, and make your wilderness and solitary place to be glad.

Finally, remember, the time is short. The six working days of this short week will soon be over; the everlasting Sabbath will soon begin. Labour hard. The work is great; but what we do, must be done quickly. "We must give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word." We look "for the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Watch and work! With a Father's heart, I pray for you. With a Brother's heart, I pray for you; commending you to God and the word of his grace. "The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep;



through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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#### APPENDIX TO PAGE 27.

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It is very commonly supposed that because an episcopal church has bishops, and the Romish church also has bishops, and the bishop of Rome is the Pope, therefore an episcopal church, though Protestant, must be a hand-maid to Popery. It would be quite as legitimate to say, that whereas the Pope relies upon *Presbyters*, such as those of the Monastic orders and of the society of Jesuits, as the main supporters of his claims of supremacy, against the claims of diocesan Bishops; and whereas Presbyters are the only ministers of non-episcopal communions, therefore non-episcopal communions are hand-maids to Popery. The truth is, that a primitive episcopacy and the claims of Popery are absolutely irreconcilable. Nothing does the Pope more labour to destroy than an independent Episcopacy. No barrier stands so much in his way as the Protestant Episcopacy of England. In the famous Romish Council of Trent, the question was warmly debated whether Bishops were of a distinct *order* from Presbyters. The Legates of the Pope did all they could to stop the debate. They wanted the question to be considered as undecided, lest it should bring Bishops into unpleasant equality with Him of Rome, whom they wished to be considered as the *only Bishop by distinction of order*. It was long debated in the same council, whether Bishops held their office "*de jure divino*," or "*de jure pontificio*;" from Christ or the Pope; through the *Apostles* in general, or only *St. Peter*, as Christ's sole vicar on earth. The latter was strenuously maintained by the Regulars or Monastic orders, by the Jesuits, (the Pope's body guards,) and the Cardinal-Legates of His Holiness. Their doctrine may be seen from the following extracts from the speech of *Laynez*, General of the Jesuits. He said "the *Apostles* were made *Bishops*, not by Christ, but by *St. Peter*;" that Bishops "held their office and authority of *St. Peter's* successor." He advised the council to beware, "lest by making the institution of Bishops of *divine right*, they should take away the *Hierarchy* and bring an *Oligarchy*, or rather an *Anarchy*." He censured those who held there is any power in Bishops, received from Christ, "because it would take away the *privilege of the Roman Church*, that the Pope is the *Head of the Church*, and *Vicar of Christ*." "He said it was a mere contradiction, to say the Pope is Head of the Church and the government Monarchical, and then say there is a power or jurisdiction not derived from him, but received from others."

The discourse of the learned Jesuit was exceedingly extolled by the special advocates of the Popedom. "The Papalists," says an historian of the Council, "said it was most learned and substantial." The strenuous admirers of its doctrines were among the Regulars, the Jesuits, the Legates and Cardinals. But who were the strenuous *opponents* of such doctrines? Bishops—and the Divines whom they brought with them to the Council. Of the former, several



spoke in defence of such doctrines as the following, from the speech of the Archbishop of Grenada: "Whosoever a Bishop shall be, whether in Rome or in Angubium, all are of the same merit, and of the same priesthood, and all successors of the Apostles." "He inveighed against those who said St. Peter had ordained the other Apostles, Bishops. He admonished the council to study the Scriptures and observe that power to teach throughout the world, to administer the sacraments and to govern the church, is equally given to all. And therefore as the Apostles had authority, not from Peter, but from Christ, so the successors of the Apostles have not power from Peter, but from Christ himself."

The Archbishop of Paris was conspicuous in his opposition to the doctrines of the Monks, Jesuits, Legates and Cardinals. He dated the commencement of the Pope's war against Episcopacy, in the eleventh century. "The Bishops (he said) held their authority entire, until the year 1050, when it received a great blow by the Cluniacensian and Cistercian Congregations, (Monastic orders) and others which arose in that age, because many functions, proper and essential to Bishops, were by their means reduced to Rome. But when the Mendicants began after the year 1200, almost all the exercise of Episcopal authority was quite taken away, and given to them by privilege. Now this new congregation, born but the other day, (Jesuits,) which is neither secular nor regular, to go beyond their predecessors, doth labour to take away all jurisdiction of Bishops, by saying it is not given them by God, and that they ought to acknowledge that they have received it of men." The Jesuits have well continued in the same course ever since. They have no liking for diocesan Episcopacy claiming to hold from Christ, instead of the Pope.

We see from the above that opposition to the divine institution of an independent diocesan Episcopacy, did not originate with Protestants. It began long before the Reformation. It was the monastic doctrine in the 11th century; the Jesuit doctrine in the 16th. The inferior clergy maintained it in support of the high claims of the papal throne. The Bishops opposed it, in resistance of those claims. Then, as now, the shortest way to favour despotism, was to preach leveldism. It is curious to see in the debates of the Council of Trent, how the special "*Papalists*," as the historian calls them, in trying to elevate the Pope, by depressing the Bishops, contended for parity of order between them and Presbyters, with many of the same arguments which are now used for the same parity, by Protestants, under the idea that, in contending against Diocesan Episcopacy, they are really warring against Popery.

The above extracts have been taken from *Fra Paolo's History of the Council of Trent*, Book 7. An extract from another author will conclude this note. "When the Pope could not carry his cause against episcopacy in the council of Trent, he took another method, and that was to set up a number of Priests, that is the Regulars (Monks) whom he exempted from the jurisdiction of their respective bishops, and framed them into a method and discipline of their own, accountable only to superiors of his and their own contriving. These usurpations upon the episcopal authority, made the famous Archbishop of Spalato quit his great preferments in the Church of Rome, and travel into England in the reign of James I. to seek for a more primitive and independant episcopacy. Himself, in his *Consilium Profectionis*, gives the same reasons for it; and that this shameful depression of episcopacy in the Church of Rome, was the cause of his leaving her." — *Leslie on Qualifications to Administer the Sacraments*.

\* We include the Cardinals among the inferior clergy; for though they constitute the consistory which really rules the Romish Church, and claims in the name of the Pope to rule the Church Universal, they are almost all of the order of Presbyters or Priests. They are 70 in number, when the sacred college is complete; of whom only 6 are Bishops. Fifty are Priests, the rest Deacons. Whether the Pope relies upon Bishops for the support of his peculiar claims, or feels it necessary to surround himself with a cordon sanitaire, against Bishops, is manifest.

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